The BUSINESS of Retail

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Drawing in daytime foot traffic

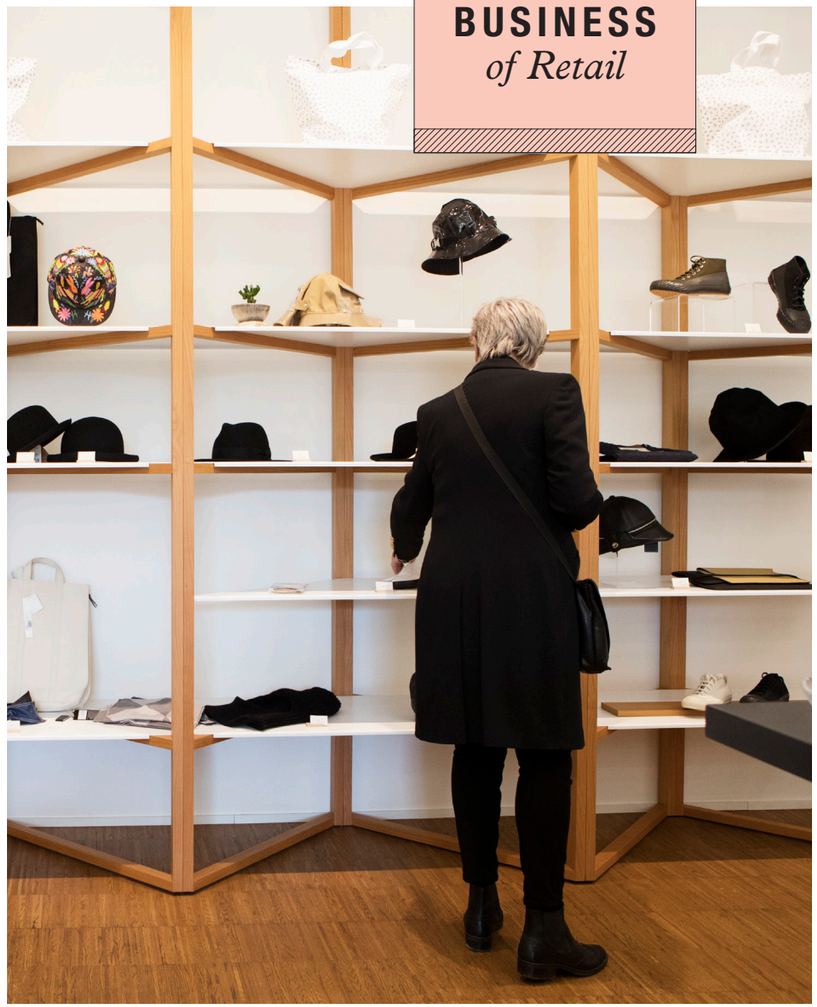
Tenoha

Milan

Housed in a sleek, off-white 1930s building (once a wallpaper factory), Tenoha stands out a mile from the slightly grubby 19th-century townhouses surrounding it. Although Milan's canal-threaded Navigli neighbourhood has long been popular at night for its thriving bar and restaurant scene, Japanese owner Sayu (an Italian food products importer) knew pulling in people during the day required a different formula. Cue Tenoha: a destination shop just as unusual inside as outside.

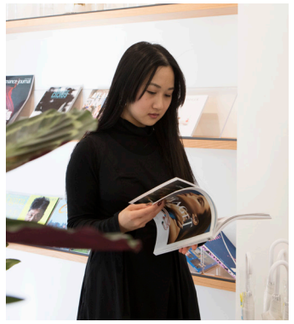
Visitors to this outpost of Japanese-Italian living, which opened last year, will find a multiuse space with a smartly designed mix of retail and dining, plus office space and exhibition rooms. It has been taken over by the Italian branch of Tokyo shop Tenoha Daikanyama and the complex's interiors curated by Park Associati, which inserted large windows into the façade to draw in passers-by.

"It's set up so you have activities that are commonplace in Japan with a food concept that is relaxed and easy for Italians to get behind"



Inside, shoppers can peruse a large selection of Japanese crafts, teas and saké, office supplies (including an elegant stationery brand from Craft Design Technology), clothing and accessories (trainers from Moonstar to name just one) and printed media (including cult Nippon titles such as MONOCLE favourite *Casa Brutus*).

Developer Issei Komi selected the site in Via Vigevano partly for the foot traffic and partly because he had previously opened Tokyo Table (now closed), an establishment serving *otsumami* (snacks to enjoy with alcoholic drinks), on the same street. "The aim [eventually] is to create a small cluster of Japanese attractions that could become an all-day destination," says Komi, who runs Italia Fudosan, a property firm with an impressive record of Japanese retail and food businesses that it has helped set up in Italy.



Further inside the complex, customers can unwind at a restaurant and café that has a central open courtyard. It serves a mix of Japanese street food and Italian cuisine along with an array of tasty Japan-inspired cocktails. For those who love the space so much that they want to set down more permanent roots, there is even a co-working space on site with a mix of meeting rooms and communal tables. The exhibition space can be used for fashion shows, new design collections and workshops to learn arts and crafts, such as origami.

"It's set up so you have activities that are commonplace in Japan with a food concept that is relaxed and easy for Italians to get behind," says Komi. "The numbers seem to be proving us right after just one year." — IC

tenoha.it

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